record, the Court decided to dispense with the attendance of the journalists.

No action by the Government is called for in this case.

**Procurement of Anti-Mine Vehicles**

219. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had purchased 90 anti-mine vehicles for counter insurgency operation in J&K and North-East in 1998;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; including the cost; and

(c) whether quotations for the purchase of vehicles were invited and if so, the derails thereof including the rates submitted by each firm?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Urgent acquisition of a suitable vehicle to protect troops against the Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) was considered imperative in view of escalated use of such devices by the insurgents, leading to ever-increasing casualties and effect on troops' morale due to lack of a suitable response thereto. Technical analysis of the characteristics of the alternative vehicles explored through our Military Attaches abroad established that MPV CASSPIR of Ms Reumech suited best the requirment of Army for a Mine Protected Vehicle and the other vehicles were not considered suitable on consideration of cost, mobility, protection level, carrying capacity and delivery schedule. Techno commercial offers, obtained from the vendor, were subjected to close scrutiny and appraisal, followed by sustained negotiations, wherein a unit price of US $ 1,25,000 was reached against the original, budgetary quote of US $ 1,53,000.